

Chapter 3: Library Media Specialist as Leader and Partner

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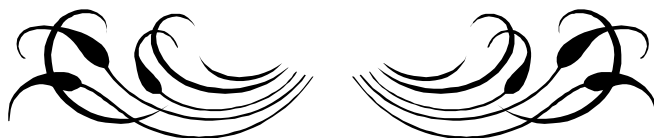
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LEADERSHIP

■ Introduction

A fundamental responsibility of the library media specialist is to provide the leadership and expertise necessary to ensure that the library media program is an integral part of the instructional program of the school.” (AASL 26) Working within the school curriculum demands a competent information specialist who has the skills necessary to work with constituents both inside and outside the school environment.

In the task of coordinating the library information services and library services with the information needs and interests of its patrons, the library media specialist is charged with three distinct roles as outlined in *Information Power*: information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant.

“Through these roles, library media specialists provide:

- ***access to information and ideas by assisting students and staff in identifying information resources and in interpreting and communicating intellectual content;***
- ***formal and informal instruction in information skills, the production of materials, and the use of information and instructional technologies;***
- ***recommendations for instructional planning to individual teachers as well as assistance in school-wide planning of curricular and instructional activities”***
(AASL 26).

The importance of leadership is manifested through these roles; they must be consistently applied by the practicing library media

specialist. To carry out these roles successfully, the library media specialist must possess attributes common to all leaders. Some of these attributes are: consistency, fairness, competence, confidence, flexibility, and the ability to get along with people, to communicate, to delegate tasks, and to identify and effectively deal with conflict situations. These leadership skills continue to evolve as the program grows and changes.

■ Leadership Expectations

“Effective leadership articulates the vision of a library media program with enthusiasm and confidence, inspiring others to support its goals.” (AASL 42).

A quality library media center program reflects the leadership skills of the library media specialist. The library media specialist must have a vision which guides in setting the goals and objectives for the program. As leader, the library media specialist articulates the library media center program, shares expertise, develops partnerships, and demonstrates commitment to the educational mission. The library media specialist is a catalyst for effective learning as well as a facilitator in helping others reach their potential.

The library media specialist, as leader, does not exist in an educational vacuum. The library media specialist takes a proactive and interactive stance, involving others in the development and achievement of the library media center’s goals. The library media specialist maintains open lines of communication through participation in building, district, and community organizations. Involvement, collaboration, and a positive attitude make the library media specialist an invaluable part of the educational team.

The library media specialist, as leader:

- exhibits ethical behavior;
- articulates the goals of the LMC program to both the school and the public;
- commits to continuous planning and evaluation of the LMC program;
- participates as a change agent in the restructuring process of school programs;
- encourages teachers through collaborative partnerships to experiment with resources, activities and teaching strategies;
- plans and implements staff development for effective use of resources and technological tools;
- initiates use of emerging technologies by students and faculty;
- interacts with planning teams throughout the school and district;
- targets and shares new trends and issues in the field of education;
- develops partnerships with outside agencies and the community;
- maintains awareness of educational goals at the national, state and district levels;
- participates in professional organizations at local, state, and national levels;
- participates in and/or attends professional development seminars, workshops, and conferences;
- participates as an active member of interdisciplinary teams;
- provides individual and group guidance in student learning;
- mentors colleagues at all levels; and
- extends the world of information beyond the walls of the school.

PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

“As partners in the learning process, library media specialists provide the necessary human link between a well-developed library media program and the users served by the program. As such, they translate the goals presented in the mission statement into vibrant, inspiring learning experiences. Library media specialists bring to the school community expert knowledge about the world of information and ideas in all their forms.” (AASL 24)



A quality school library media center program is based on successful partnerships that include the library media specialist, school administrators, teachers, students, and the community at large. To ensure success of the library media center program, the library media specialist accepts the responsibility to initiate and maintain effective partnerships. Just as administrators, teachers, students, and the community have expectations of the library media specialist, the library media specialist also has expectations of members of the educational community. Dedication, professionalism and cooperation are expected of all partners. Among all partners, there should be a common perception of library media center services, a common commitment to goals and a common understanding of the importance of working together. All partners share in the educational process to help students become lifelong learners and productive citizens.

■ **School Administrators**

The school administrator is the primary educational leader in the school.

A strong positive partnership between the school administrator and library media specialist is invaluable.

Administrators, both building and district level, who provide encouragement and support, will demonstrate a positive attitude toward integration of the library media center program into the school curriculum. Administrators convey the value of the library media center program as it relates to the school and district goals. When administrators support the library media center programs, this inspires a positive response from students, staff, and community members.

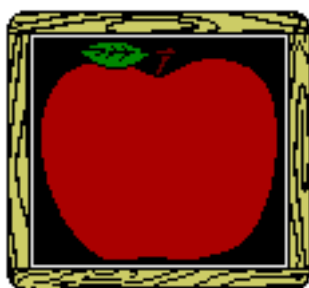
The administrator, as partner:

- designates the LMC as a priority in the school's program;
- supports philosophically and financially the mission of the LMC;
- communicates expectations of the LMC program to the school's staff;
- facilitates the integration of the LMC program into the curriculum;
- serves as an advocates for the LMC program at the district level;
- recognizes and ensures that the LMS is a member of committees and the instructional team;
- supports resource-based teaching and flexible scheduling;
- secures appropriate staffing to carry out the LMC program;
- builds partnerships between teachers and the LMS;
- provides time for LMS planning and collaboration;
- cooperates in requiring student conduct and behavior in the LMC which is conducive to learning;
- empowers the LMS to plan and implement staff development activities;
- participates in staff development activities for the effective use of resources and technological tools; and
- is aware of and supports state standards and national guidelines.

The library media specialist, as leader, does not exist in an educational vacuum. The library media specialist takes a proactive and interactive stance, involving others in the development and achievement of the library media center's goals.

■ Teachers

An effective library media program is directly linked to the involvement of teachers. A natural collaboration will occur between teachers and the library media specialist when resource-based learning is central to the curriculum. Such collaboration and guidance enhances students' abilities to locate, analyze, and effectively communicate information. To make learning more diversified, effective, and satisfying, the teacher and library media specialist collaborate to devise and perfect new techniques. Through facilitated learning experiences, students make connections from the classroom to the world.



The Library Media Specialist and teacher partnership has a positive impact on the development of student information skills.

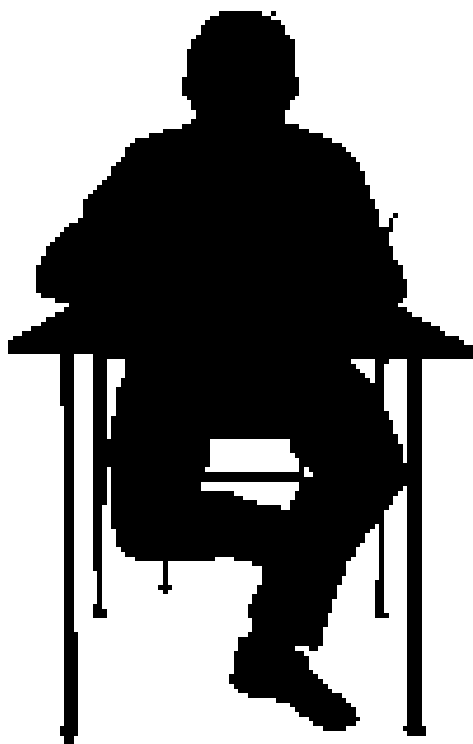
The teacher, as partner:

- promotes purposeful use of the LMC;
- designs resource-based learning activities in collaboration with the LMS to ensure integration of information search strategies;
- evaluates resource-based learning activities in collaboration with the LMS;
- encourages students to use a variety of information sources in the research process;
- encourages students to use a variety of informational formats;
- facilitates students' presentation of information in a variety of formats;
- provides input in the selection and evaluation of LMC materials;
- supplies feedback about the effectiveness of the LMC program;
- participates in staff development activities planned and implemented by the LMS for effective use of resources and technological tools; and
- fosters an appreciation and respect for the library experience.

■ Students

Students must be active participants in their own learning. They become true partners when they take an active rather than a passive role in utilizing library media center resources.

Students contribute constructively to the atmosphere of the library media center by responding enthusiastically to new technologies, sharing their knowledge of resources with others, and participating in the evaluation of materials and services. The library media specialist, in partnership with the student and teacher, assists the student in developing a commitment to lifelong learning.



The student, as partner:

- participates in the LMC program;
- contributes a positive attitude toward learning;
- explores new ideas;
- initiates requests for assistance;
- accepts responsibility for proper treatment of resources;
- understands the LMS's expectations and LMC program guidelines;
- provides feedback about their needs regarding facilities, resources, and services;
- pursues questions of personal interest;
- utilizes the LMC resources to fulfill research assignments;
- develops appreciation for a variety of literature; and
- reads for pleasure.

■ Technology Coordinator / Facilitator

The district/building technology coordinator and library media specialist must coordinate to provide support and expertise to teachers, students, and administrators in an effort to seamlessly integrate technology skills into the curriculum.

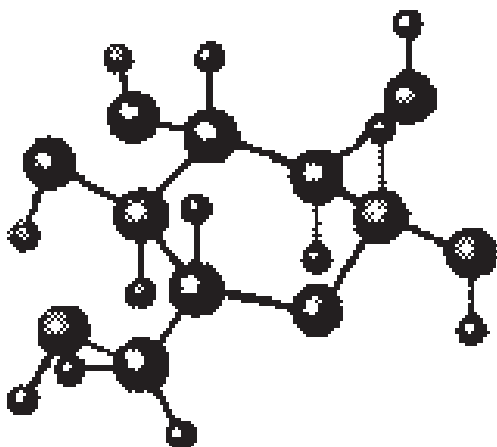
The technology coordinator/ facilitator, as partner:

- collaborates with the LMS in planning long- and short-range technology goals, including budgets for networking, equipment, and resources;
- acts as a consultant and facilitator for the LMS to incorporate the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning;
- supports and facilitates the inservice and professional development activities in the area of technology;
- promotes the effective and efficient use of information retrieval skills and media production as tools for learning; and
- keeps the equipment and network in operation.



■ District Library Media Personnel

District personnel play an important role in the success of the library media center program, providing administrative leadership and coordination of the total program. They develop partnerships with administrators, members of the community, and the library media specialist. District personnel serve as a liaison between the building library media center staff, the district administration, and the board of education.



*The district coordinator/
supervisor/director is a
cohesive element promoting
the vision for the district-
wide library media center
program.*

The district coordinator/supervisor/ director, as partner:

- coordinates the evaluation, acquisition and processing of materials, equipment, and services;
- facilitates acquisition and evaluation of technological services and programs;
- collaborates with the LMS in planning long- and short-range budget and program goals;
- plans facilities cooperatively with the building LMS;
- supervises the preparation of reports and surveys;
- designs and facilitates the implementation plan for attaining state and regional school library media standards and national guidelines;
- evaluates building level programs;
- collaborates with the LMS in planning inservices for building level LMS and other school personnel;
- assumes a major role in the selection of LMC personnel and support staff;
- collaborates with the LMS and administrators in program planning and integrating information skills into the curriculum;
- develops and maintains an effective professional resource collection at the district level; and
- initiates public relations and marketing efforts.

EXPANDED PARTNERSHIPS

The library media specialist develops a global view of the library profession by participating beyond local organizations. It is equally important that the library media specialist be concerned with building partnerships with all types of organizations and agencies that are advocates for children.

“ . . . school library media specialist must ‘lobby’ everyday with their meaningful programs, demonstrating to students, teachers, administrators, and parents that they and the services in the media program make a difference in the lives of children.” (Woolls 246)

The LMS, in expanded partnerships:

- networks with other LMSs on local, regional, state, and national levels;
- provides leadership for the profession by active involvement in library organizations;
- represents the library profession through active participation in nonlibrary organizations;
- shares professional expertise through workshops, publishing, and committee service;
- advocates for progressive educational legislation; and
- contributes to the LMS image as a professional educator.

■ The Community

The community, which includes parents, alumni, businesses, friends of the library, and volunteers, expects students to learn and to be successful, productive citizens; therefore, community partnerships are crucial in supporting the total educational learning process.

As stated in Information Power,
*“... all members of the
educational community,
... become partners in a shared
goal — providing successful
learning experiences for all
students.”* (AASL 21-22)

The community, as partner:

- provides philosophical support of the program;
- encourages students to utilize the LMC resources;
- supports the LMC program financially;
- provides support by volunteering assistance or through membership in advisory groups;
- demonstrates the importance of libraries through personal use;
- cooperates with the public library and community organizations to provide additional resources and programs;
- provides speakers to support the curriculum; and
- reinforces the connection of the school to the community and work place.

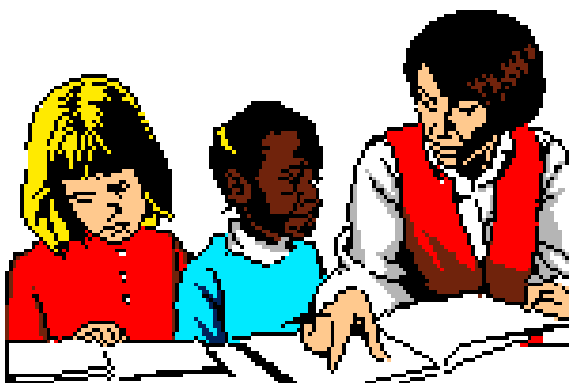


■ Library Media and Technology Consultant

The Library Media and Technology Consultant in the Division of Instruction at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is responsible for the development and improvement of library media center programs in Missouri. The consultant is an advocate for the library media programs across the state and serves as a liaison between library media specialists and the Department. The consultant cooperates with other Department staff members who work in areas related to library media centers.

Library media specialists may ask for assistance by contacting the

**Library Media and Technology
Consultant,
Division of Instruction,
Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education,
P.O. Box 480,
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480.**



The Library Media and Technology Consultant, as partner:

- assists school districts through on-site visits;
- provides guidance in the interpretation, implementation, and review of the *Standards for Missouri School Library Media Centers*;
- participates in revision of certification requirements;
- encourages the integration of the library media program into the curriculum;
- advocates inclusion of the LMS as a member of the instructional team;
- engages in public relation activities in support of library media programs;
- disseminates information concerning programs directly impacting students;
- supports the use of emerging technology;
- develops partnerships with other agencies (e.g., Missouri State Library);
- tracks and communicates trends and issues;
- maintains a limited collection of professional resources for circulation; and
- provides information related to workshops and college/university courses.

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